Death of Indians in hotel collapse in Singapore

1308. DR. SHYAM SUNDER MOHAPATRA:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Indian national who died in Singapore in the recent hotel collapse there;

(b) whether any compensation has been paid by the Singapore Government to the next of kin of the victims; and

(c) if so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) According to available information, one Indian national, Smt. Durga Devi, wife of one Mr. Ram Narain Rati Ram Pandey, a Singapore national, working as a watchman in the same hotel, was killed in the hotel collapse in Singapore on 15th March, 1986.

(b) and (c) No compensation has been paid so far by the Singapore Government to the next of kin. An amount of Singapore $ 2000 has, however, been paid as immediate relief to the family by the Singapore Council of Social Service. The Singapore Government has set up a Commission of Enquiry to look into the causes of collapse. Since the hotel was not insured, the question of compensation has been put off till the enquiry is completed by the Commission.

Co-ordination by the Ministry of Defence with the Ministry of Home Affairs in Border Security

1309. DR. SHYAM SUNDER MOHAPATRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether the Ministry of Defence are co-ordinating with the Ministry of Home Affairs in intelligence activities and in border security along the Indo-Pak borders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARUN SINGH): Yes, Sir.

Manufacture of V.C.R's.

1310. SHRI LEONARD SOLOMAN SARING: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what were the policy decisions taken by Government from time to time since 1980 and dates thereof regarding licensing/approval for manufacture of Video Cassette Recorders;

(b) how have these policies been implemented;

(c) whether it is a fact that such series of policy shifts have resulted in one private company becoming the sole licensing manufacturer of Video Cassette Recorders;

(d) whether Government propose to conduct any enquiry into the circumstances and manner in which this company was allowed to have monopoly and also to fix responsibilities on the concerned officials; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) Industrial approvals were issued during 1980—82 to a number of parties for producing VCRs, with a capacity of 500 numbers per annum, both in the small scale and organised sectors. Government announced Integrated Policy Measures on Electronics on 21-3-1985, in which it was *inter-alia* proposed that the Department of Electronics or its designated

agency would purchase technology for VCR/VCP, including technology for the manufacture of tape deck mechanism. Taking into account the views expressed at the Government-Industry Meet, held, in May, 1985, Government decided to dispense with the idea of centralised purchase. This was announced on 17-9-1985. Thereafter, on 25-10-1985, Government invited, through a Press Note, composite applications (i.e. industrial licence plus foreign collaboration) from interested entrepreneurs for the manufacture of VCR/VCPs, stating that only such units would be promoted as are prepared to commit sizeable investments for suitable vertical integration, with an accelerated phased manufacturing programme, and which have the requisite in-built capacity to keep pace with the changing technology. In response, 65 applications have been received by the prescribed last date viz., 24-1-1986, and are being scrutinised by an Inter-departmental Task Force.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Amendment of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980

1311. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued any clarification/amendment on the 26th March, 1982 regarding *ex-post facto* application of the Forest Conservation Act 1980 to such development projects which were administratively sanctioned and started by State Governments prior to its enforcement on the 25th October, 1980;

(b) if so, the reasons for issuing such clarification or amendment without any specific provisions in the Forest (Conservation) Act and in contravention to the Act, without placing it before parliament; and

(c) how many development projects which were administratively sanctioned and started prior to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been stopped or affected in Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere in the country by this clarification or amendment and how much money has been spent on such projects uptil now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) The circular issued by Government of India on 26th March, 1982 was not in regard to ex-*post-facto* application of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Action against Jail Officials at the behest of Charles Sobhraj

1312. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that whenever in the past complaints were made by the officials of Tihar Jail to the higher authorities about Charles Sobhraj who had escaped from the jail, they were transferred at the behest of Sobhraj and in certain cases, the officials who complained against him were even dismissed from service;

(b) whether Government have made any inquiry into the cases where the jail officials on having complained against Sobhraj were transferred or dismissed from service; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof stating the action taken/proposed to be taken by Government to rectify the harm done to such officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) No, Sir, it is not a fact that in the past any officials of Tihar Jail was penalised or transferred at the behest of Charles Sobhraj, who recently scaped from the jail.

(b) and (c) In view of the answer given in (a) above, question does not arise.